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Smoke-Free Public Places and Support for Smoke-Free Legislation among Mississippi Adults

MANY STATES AND COMMUNITIES HAVE SMOKE-FREE LAWS - AS OF OCT 2005

The Southeast

Florida - all restaurants and workplaces are smoke-free. *Georgia* - all restaurants and workplaces are smoke-free with the exception of establishments that do not admit persons under 21.

In the remaining southeastern states, 22 communities have enacted smoke-free workplace ordinances, and 20 communities have enacted 100 percent smoke-free restaurant ordinances, including the following:

- o Birmingham, AL
- o Fayetteville, AR
- o Pine Bluff, AR
- o Athens, GA
- o Conyers, GA
- o Decatur, GA
- o Gainesville, GA
- o Valdosta, GA
- o Lexington, KY
- o Metcalfe, MS

The Nation

In 8 states all workplaces are smoke-free, and in 12 states all restaurants are smoke-free. An additional 293 municipalities require that workplaces are smoke-free, and an additional 251 municipalities require that restaurants are 100 percent smoke-free.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS IN PLACES WITH SMOKE-FREE LAWS

What the Research Shows

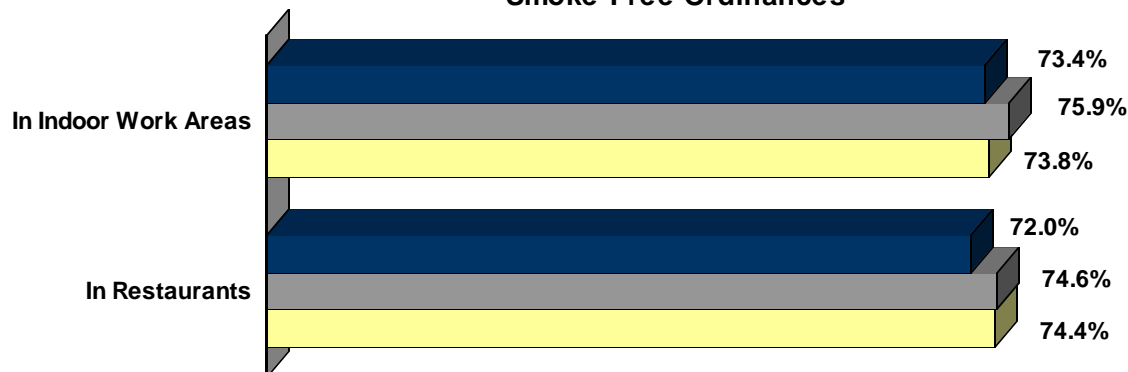
Peer-reviewed studies that have examined aggregate objective economic outcomes have not detected negative effects on hotels, restaurants or bars following the implementation of smoke-free laws. Within the Southeast, researchers have investigated the economic impact of smoke-free laws on restaurants in three places: Florida, Lexington, KY, and Fayetteville, AR.

Florida¹ -- Restaurant sales increased after the statewide law created 100 percent smoke-free restaurants.

Lexington, KY^{2,3} -- Recently enacted smoke-free laws had no economic impact on bars and restaurants. However, public support for these laws increased after the smoke-free law went into effect.

Fayetteville, AR⁴ -- A recent study demonstrated that there had not been any negative economic impact on hospitality revenues following the enactment of smoke-free laws.

Percentage of Mississippi Adults Who Support
Smoke-Free Ordinances



■ Democrats ■ Republicans ■ Overall

Smoke-Free Public Places and Support for Smoke-Free Ordinances among Mississippi Adults

SMOKE-FREE LAWS AND ORDINANCES

Although the decision to smoke is an individual choice, exposure to secondhand smoke is not. The increased health risks of exposure to secondhand smoke include lung cancer, heart disease, and respiratory illness. The risks for children are greater because the effects of secondhand smoke impact their childhood development and carry over into adulthood. Smoke-free ordinances in public places can greatly reduce these health risks caused by secondhand smoke. Across the United States, many states and communities have passed smoke-free laws with wide public support. Numerous studies investigated changes in sales tax revenue and other economic outcomes following the enactment of these smoke-free laws. None of these studies that examined objective data found any negative impact on restaurants and other hospitality industries, and several states and municipalities experienced increased sales tax revenue after smoke-free laws took effect.

SUPPORT FOR SMOKE-FREE PUBLIC PLACES

Information about smoking bans and levels of support for smoking bans was collected from the Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control, which was administered by the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University. More than 70 percent of Mississippi adults support smoke-free ordinances in restaurants. Even more Mississippi adults support smoke-free ordinances in hospitals (90%), shopping malls (85%), fast food restaurants (84%), convenience stores (88%), indoor sporting events (88%), and indoor work areas (73%). Results from the Social Climate Survey also revealed that smoke-free public places are an issue with substantial bipartisan support among Mississippi adults. Similar percentages of Republicans and Democrats stated that each of the public places listed above should be smoke-free.

METHODS

The Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control was conducted in the summer of 2005 through telephone interviews of Mississippi adults. The survey utilized the CATI facilities of the Survey Research Unit at the Social Science Research Center. Stratified RDD sampling procedures were used to collect 809 household interviews. The sampling error (binomial questions with 50/50 split) was no larger than +/-3.4 percent (95% confidence interval). The study was carried out by a research group led by Robert McMillen, PhD, at the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University and was sponsored by The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi.

CONCLUSION

A growing number of Southern states and municipalities have passed legislation and ordinances that make public places, such as restaurants and workplaces, completely smoke-free. These policies have substantial bipartisan public support across the United States, and no objective, peer-reviewed studies have found any negative economic impacts of smoke-free laws on the hospitality industries. Moreover, results from the Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control demonstrate substantial support among Mississippi adults for smoke-free ordinances in public places. Despite sizeable support for smoke-free public settings in this state, smoke-free policies continue to lag behind public opinion.

AUTHORS

Dr. McMillen is an Associate Research Professor at the Social Science Research Center. His interests involve risk factors related to chronic disease. Dr. McMillen coordinated the design, analysis, and reporting of the statewide and national surveys of the Social Climate of Tobacco Control, as well as analyzed data from the Mississippi Youth Tobacco Survey. Dr. McMillen also holds the position of Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychology at Mississippi State University.

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